

Issue 205

17 February 1996

# CBW

Coach and Bus Week

The PSV industry's news weekly

## ONE YEAR TO BELT UP

### Norris sets out school rules



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Market down but total share is up **Page 6**



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# Alf Moseley Continental

## QUALITY NEW & USED COACHES

### 1983 (February) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats trimmed in brown/orange moquette, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, semi-automatic gearbox, finished white/green/red.

M.O.T. 27th January 1997

### 1983 (May) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats trimmed in brown/orange moquette, courier seat, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, semi-automatic gearbox, finished white/green/red.

M.O.T. 18th July 1996

### 1984 (May) ROYAL TIGER PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

49 reclining seats RETRIMMED in brown/red/orange moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet with continental door, driver's berth, tinted double glazed side windows with roller blinds, power operated entrance door, TELMA 6 speed ZF gearbox, finished all white.

M.O.T. 21st June 1996

### 1984 (April) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN

46 reclining seats trimmed in brown/orange moquette, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, rear servery, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, courier seat, semi-automatic gearbox, finished white/green/red.

M.O.T. 10th February 1997

### 1986 (December) LEYLAND TIGER ROYAL DOYEN 12M

49 reclining seats trimmed in grey/red/yellow moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet with continental door, water boiler, driver's berth, tinted double glazed side windows with roller blinds, power operated entrance door, TELMA 6 speed ZF gearbox, finished all white.

M.O.T. 25th December 1996

### 1989 (February) LEYLAND TIGER 290 12M DUPLÉ 320

57 reclining seats trimmed grey/red moquette, power entrance door, tinted side windows, (ZF 6 speed gearbox), finished all white.

M.O.T. February 1997

### 1989 (January) MERCEDES BENZ 0303 12M

53 reclining seats (VOGEL) Red/orange/yellow moquette, courier seat, rear continental door, tinted side windows with roller blinds, power entrance door with peage window, full SUTRAK air conditioning, carpet to gangway and driver's area finished red and cream.

M.O.T. 30th November 1996

### 1983 (June) LEYLAND ROYAL TIGER DOYEN 12M

50 reclining seats RETRIMMED in brown/red/orange moquette, courier seat, tinted double glazed side windows, power operated entrance door, semi-automatic gearbox, driver's fan, finished all white.

M.O.T. 12th September 1996

### 1984 (May) DAF MB200DKFL VAN HOOL ALIZEE

49/53 LABELLE reclining seats trimmed in brown/orange striped moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows with curtains, wired for TV/Video, power entrance door, centre sunken demountable toilet with continental door, finished in cream/red/yellow.

M.O.T. 20th October 1996

### 1984 (April) LEYLAND TIGER 12M DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN

48 reclining seats trimmed in brown/orange moquette, rear offside sunken toilet with continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, power operated entrance door, semi-automatic gearbox, finished white/green/red.

M.O.T. 20th December 1996

### 1984 (May) ROYAL TIGER PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

49 reclining seats RETRIMMED in brown/red/orange moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet with continental door, driver's berth, tinted double glazed side windows with roller blinds, power operated entrance door, TELMA 6 speed ZF gearbox, finished all white.

M.O.T. 3rd February 1996

### 1986 (December) LEYLAND ROYAL TIGER DOYEN 12M

49 reclining seats trimmed in brown/red/yellow striped moquette, courier seat, centre sunken toilet with continental door, water boiler, driver's berth, tinted double glazed side windows with roller blinds, power operated entrance door, TELMA 6 speed manual gearbox, finished all white.

M.O.T. 11th October 1996

### 1989 (May) SCANIA K113 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500

49 reclining seats trimmed in brown/red/orange/yellow chevron moquette, courier seat, tinted double glazed side windows with curtains, power operated entrance door, centre sunken demountable toilet with continental door, driver's berth, drinks machine, TELMA, finished white/silver/red/black.

M.O.T. 12th January 1997

### 1989 (April) DENNIS JAVELIN 12M

53 reclining seats trimmed in brown/red/orange/yellow chevron moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows, power entrance door, drop driver finished white/silver/red/black.

M.O.T. 27th March 1996

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**W**ORRIED about seatbelts? Now that Steven Norris has put your mind at rest by setting out the timetable for compulsory fitment, surely it should all be plain sailing?

However, judging by the large number of phone callers besieging the *CBW* news desk, the minister has left a minefield for coach, bus and minibus operators to negotiate.

Despite the heavy weight of evidence from the industry, the new regulations are virtually indistinguishable from proposals laid down by Dr Brian Mawhinney in March 1995.

The strength of feeling expressed through correspondence to the *CBW* letters page over the past year has not subsided. Although market conditions may have changed as public opinion swings in favour of compulsory seatbelts, the practical difficulties of enforced seatbelts on a public service vehicle, and the arguments against retrofitment in inappropriate vehicles, remain the same.

Concessions are minimal. Pre-1988 vehicles are given a year's grace and the anticipated start date has been put back five months from September to February.

But what a strange date to introduce new regulations affecting business geared to an academic year.

However, there are more fundamental questions which confront operators. Will local authorities have more money in their budgets by 10 February 1997? Will parents and schools understand the subtleties of a law which distinguishes between two apparently identical vehicles - one a coach needing belts, the other a bus which does not?

How do you explain that a local service bus carrying 70 or 80 pupils is not 'undertaking a journey specifically for the purpose of carrying children'?

If all that is not enough, what about the question of responsibility? Where seatbelts are fitted, is it the driver, the operator, the school, the parent, or the local authority who is responsible for the pupils using them?

No wonder some operators are saying enough is enough. Why do schools contracts when you've got all this hassle? For many this could be the final straw.

If, as seems likely, a significant number of operators do decide to kick school contracts into touch, it is schools and their pupils who will suffer through an immediate shortage of vehicles and higher prices to pay.

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**Credit card hotline** 0181 868 7618  
**Readerlink back issues department** 0181 868 6625

**Typesetting and origination:** Meridian In Colour, Newark Road, Peterborough

**Printing:** William Gibbons, Wolverhampton

*CBW* is available only by pre-paid subscription. Domestic subscription rate is £49 per year; Europe £92 and worldwide air mail £124. All rates include postage.

Contributions should be sent to The Editor, *Coach and Bus Week*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough PE1 1DS

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ISSN 1351-3877  
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events

**22 February:** Buses Worldwide meeting, Fred Tallent Hall, Drummond Street, London NW1. Ted Relton on Berlin and Stockholm Revisited. Details from Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants, GU13 9HE

**29 February and 1 March:** The Bus in a New Era, Changing the Rules? Fourth TAS conference on the future of the bus in local transport. Kensington Palace Hotel, London, W8 (technical session and visit, 28 February).

**19 March:** *CBW Canadian Study Tour sponsored by Volvo and Plaxton.* Details from Paul Tappin on 01235 819393 or fax 01235 816464

**20 March:** CIT's Frederick Speight Memorial Lecture by Moir Lockhead, chief executive of FirstBus, Moving People into the New Millennium. Details from Jeff English on 01603 457348

**27 March:** CTC Charity Ball, Forte Crest, Birmingham, 7.30pm. Tickets from Derrick Alsop on 0115 97322660

**27 March:** Conference on use of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), Commonwealth Centre, London. Details from LP Gas Association, Alma House, Alma Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0AZ, tel 01737 224700, fax 01737 241116

**27&28 March:** British Travel Trade Fair, NEC, Birmingham. Details from Reed Exhibitions on 0181 910 7896

15-18 April: Policies Not Politics, CPT Scottish Conference, Turnberry Hotel, Ayreshire. Contact Peter Thompson on 0141 6394984

**18 April:** Buses Worldwide meeting, Fred Tallent Hall, Drummond Street, London NW1. David Corke on Cyprus, the past 10 years. Details from Ian Johnston, 3 Cypress Drive, Fleet, Hants, GU13 9HE

**18-19 April:** Getting Public Transport Ready for the 21st Century. Nottingham Transport Conference and Exhibition 1996, University of Nottingham. Details from Ann Chapman, Conference Secretary, CICC, PO Box 14, Cambridge CB1 5EN, tel 01223 881622, fax 01223 881604

▼ Coach and Bus

# Council under fire fro

A series of contract U-turns put Gloucestershire county council back in

by Mark Williams

GLOUCESTERSHIRE operators are demanding an explanation of the county council's contract tendering system after a series of contract U-turns.

The council was in the spotlight last year when it was revealed that two of its transport officers had also been transport managers of coach companies - one of which, Churchdown, had its contracts terminated due to poor performance.

An internal audit said there had been no conflict of interest, but the council officers have since faced disciplinary action. A separate audit of school transport is being kept secret by the council, and it is refusing to pub-

lish the results of school contract tendering.

Last week, the council was once again under fire for removing contracts from one operator whose vehicles had been taken off the road, awarding them to Bennetts, then considering passing them back to the original operator to give him a 'second chance.'

Another operator, Warners Bus and Coach, has been asked to re-tender for a contract, on the basis that the council felt the response to tendering had been poor. Yet it is known that at least two operators bid for the school run. Warners also alleges that the vehi-

cle size required for the temporary cover was inadequate.

Mike Taplin, public transport co-ordinator at GCC, said a decision about Bennetts' contracts had not yet been taken, but that council officers were discussing the options.

"We have to ask whether we want to re-tender the whole lot or give an operator a second chance," he told *CBW*. "We have to take a view of an operator's overall record. The original operator is already saying it has been treated unfairly. These are its first prohibitions yet it has been chucked off



Norris: seatbelt announcement not unexpected

▼ Coach

## Law ends 'three for

THE hated 'three-for-two' concession for school buses will end in May as part of the new seatbelt regulation.

The regulation announced by secretary of state for transport Steven Norris last week (as predicted in *CBW*, 10 February) also makes seatbelts compulsory on any minibus or coach registered after 1988, on any journey specifically for school children, from 10 February 1997. Coaches older than 1988 will have a further year to comply.

The Confedera-

tion of Passenger Transport welcomed the cessation of the 'three-for-two' rule not only on the grounds that it would be impossible to observe with seatbelted vehicles, but also because the CPT says it is impractical with teenagers carrying sports equipment.

"Even though the seatbelts are to be fitted, there is no requirement for them to be worn," added CPT director general Veronica Palmer. "CPT wishes to make it clear here and now that it must not be the respon-

### SEATBELTS - fact file

**Which journey?** Seatbelts will be mandatory when a coach or minibus is used to take children on organised trips, where the journey is undertaken for the purposes of that trip; this includes journeys to and from school

**Which vehicles?** Minibuses (a Passenger Carrying Vehicle seating from nine to 16 passengers) and coaches (a PCV over 7.5 tonnes, seating more than 16 passengers and capable of more than 60 mph)

**Which children?** A seatbelt must be fitted to each forward-facing seat used by a child aged from three to under 16

**Which seatbelts?** The minimum requirement is a lap-belt meeting Construction and Use regulations

**The timescale:**

**1 May 1996** - three-for-two concession ends for seats fitted with seatbelts

**10 February 1997** - seatbelts must be fitted on minibuses

**10 February 1997:** coaches first registered from 1 October 1988 must have seatbelts

**10 February 1998:** seatbelts required on coaches first registered before 1 October 1988



# m ops

## unwelcome spotlight

every contract."

The re-tendering of the other contract was normal procedure, he felt.

"If we feel the response to our tendering procedure has been low, and prices do not represent value for money, we will re-tender. We have a duty to give best value."

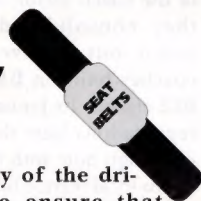
Mr Taplin said he was not close enough to the contract detail to answer Mr Warner's criticism of the temporary contracts.

He also suggested that Gloucestershire did not have an adequate supply of quality coaches, and that this was the fault of operators.



Bennetts' temporary contracts subject to 'second chance' for original contract operator

## two'



sibility of the driver to ensure that children wear the belts provided.

"That must be the responsibility of the authorities or the schools themselves. It may be that they will wish for the children to be supervised to ensure that belts are worn. This could also help combat the serious and widespread problem of vandalism on school transport."

The new minimum requirement is for a lap-belt to be fitted for every child aged between three and under 16.

It affects all minibuses between nine and 16 seats, and coaches over 16 seats, which are capable of more than 60 mph. Belts and anchorages must meet Construction and Use regulations 46 and 47.

● Want to know more about modern seating and the latest developments in seatbelts? Read next week's *CBW* for our special seating feature.

## ▼ Coach

# Back with real spirit

THE Spirit of London lives... despite its directors placing it in liquidation.

The Hounslow-based firm ran into difficulty last year, when Mike Metiand and Laurie Veysey both contracted health problems. Unable to run the company, they decided to place it in the hands of liquidators.

But its drivers felt the name and reputation both had plenty of life left in them, and pooled their personal resources to take the goodwill and two vehicles, then take over the reins to make the best of the 1996 Summer season.

"I suppose you could say we are the old guard - mostly washed up by the recession - I was in the construction industry until I dusted down my PCV licence," said the new md, Ian Collins. The rest of the management team are Howard Stevens, the sales manager; Don Fishwick, traffic manager; Peter Hopper, engineering manager; and Andrew Gayle, driver.

At the moment, Spirit of London is trading from its rented space in Spring Grove Road, formerly shared with Westbus. But this Spring, it hopes to be moving to North Feltham.

"We have a lot of good business and a good name, said Mr Collins. "But the company has taken a hammering. We've got to re-sell our-

selves into the corporate market."

A Caetano Optimo and a Fleur de Lys reproduction charabanc are the only vehicles at present but, by Summer, four, 49-seat B10M executive coaches will join the fleet.

"We're no youngsters," says Mr Collins. But we're convinced experience is no bad thing..."



I've got the Spirit of London here on my desk

## ▼ Coach

# Return of Moseley

ALF Moseley has returned to the PSV market, as predicted in *Coach and Bus Week* in November last year.

Mr Moseley had closed his coach and bus trading business in 1992, retaining his own Derby Road premises in Loughborough, but has now come back using his extensive outlet at Shepshed, which had been empty for some time. His brother Vin Moseley runs three other PSV dealerships under the Moseley name, but the businesses are unconnected.

Alf Moseley (Continental) is expected to pick up the Dennis/Marcopolo trading agreement left hanging by the liquidation of DSB Sales, and has employed former DSB director John Dunn in the frontline of its own sales force. The showroom has been stocked with a variety of second-hand vehicles.

● A full statement about the financial position of DSB Sales is expected from liquidator John Wilson, of DeLoitte & Touche in Leicester.





In brief

Better at the VI

THE Vehicle Inspectorate's staff survey released last week says attitudes and team-building have led to a broad improvement in performance over the past two years since it became an executive agency. The survey was supported by 63 per cent of staff, who filled in questionnaires.

Costs monitor

A SOFTWARE package which monitors vehicle operating costs has been introduced by London-based Freeway Fleet Systems. The company says medium-sized coach and bus operations could recoup the cost of the package within a few weeks by identifying savings on maintenance and downtime.

Tata progress

SJ CARLTON reports steady progress modifying the Indian-built Tata minibus, shown for the first time at Coach & Bus 95. The low-priced vehicle, which may go on sale at the SJ Carlton dealership for around £30,000, is being jointly developed to be suitable for the European market.

Clothes contract

UNIFORMS Unlimited has secured £500,000 in orders for clothing with Greater Manchester Buses North, the Go-Ahead Group Gateshead, Shearings, and Hyndburn Transport. GMBN is re-uniforming 1,800 staff, and Shearings has opted for a Winter uniform of ski jackets and V-neck pullovers for drivers.

Buses burned

POLICE are hunting for arsonists who destroyed two double-deck buses in North Wales and damaged five others. The cause of the incident at Vale of Llangollen Tours is still being investigated but police have confirmed the circumstances were suspicious.

▼ Coach and Bus

# Registrations drop by 12.2 per cent in January

By Mike Morgan

NEW coach and bus registrations are down 12.2 per cent on the same time last year, according to the January figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

This drop in monthly registration figures comes after the dramatic boost given to the market last year.

The fall in registrations affected the coach sector and the bus sector.

Coach numbers were down more than 13 per cent to 106, and the total of new buses fell by nearly 12 per cent to 196, giving a combined registration figure of 302.

However, this should be seen against the dramatic improvement in new vehicle deliveries which first hit the PSV market in January 1995 and continued throughout the year.

Two years ago the depressed industry commanded a total market worth just 169 vehicles - 35 coaches and 134 buses.

In January 1994 Volvo had lost top slot in the sales league to Dennis and its market share had slipped to 36.7 per cent.

Last year its share increased to 46.8 per cent and, once again in 1996, Volvo tops the combined table with a market share having grown to 53.3 per cent. Optare has started 1996 with 32 of its own complete vehicles being registered compared to 12 in 1995.

Volvo's dominance of the coach sector has further consolidated with seven out of every 10 coaches built on B10M or B12 chassis. Its January bus registrations start the year on a high note with 86 new Volvo local service buses.

While bus market penetration by manufacturers other than those listed has largely faded away, the coach sector's minority suppliers account for 14.2 per cent, including Iveco's first showing in the full-size market with two vehicles and MAN with three.

## COACH AND BUS REGISTRATIONS

January/Year to Date			
	1996 units	%	1995 units
Volvo	161	53.3	161
Dennis	61	20.2	103
Optare	32	10.6	12
Scania	25	8.3	29
DAF Bus	6	2.0	15
Bova	1	0.3	8
Others	16	5.3	16
Total	302	100	344

## COACH REGISTRATIONS

January/Year to Date			
	1996 units	%	1995 units
Volvo	75	70.8	82
Dennis	7	6.6	16
Scania	7	6.6	9
DAF Bus	1	0.9	1
Bova	1	0.9	8
Others	15	14.2	6
Total	106	100	122

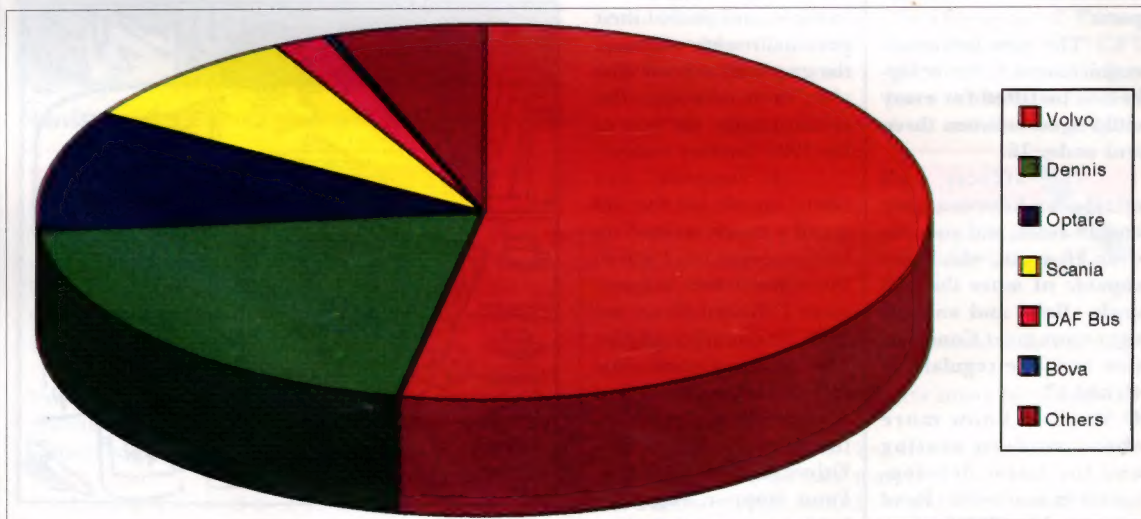
## BUS REGISTRATIONS

January/Year to Date			
	1996 units	%	1995 units
Volvo	86	43.9	79
Dennis	54	27.6	87
Optare	32	16.3	12
Scania	18	9.1	20
DAF Bus	5	2.6	14
Others	1	0.5	10
Total	196	100	222

The above table details all vehicles on designated PSV underframes registered last month in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

Source: SMMT

# A look at the PSV pie in Jan 96



Volvo clearly dominant in total but Dennis's slice of bus market is bigger than shown here





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**OPTIMUM, THAT'S OPTARE**



▼ Coach and Bus

## GAG chief has retired

GO-AHEAD Group plc's group finance director Trevor Shears has retired aged 51, and is to spend more time with his preserved tramway interests.

Mr Shears is one of the original MBO team which acquired Go-Ahead during the 1987 privatisation. He remained with the company during its flotation in 1994, and his shareholding is now worth £9 million.

Mr Shears' successor is Ian Butcher, an accountancy professional who, like Mr Shears, qualified at Peat Marwick Mitchell. Mr Butcher will join Go-Ahead in March from his current position as group finance director of bicycle manufacturer Casket plc.

▼ Bus

## Stagecoach deal: plea to the MMC

GREATER Manchester Passenger Transport Authority has asked the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to intervene in the proposed sales of GMB South to Stagecoach. It has asked the Office of Fair Trading to make the referral, claiming it will be protecting the travelling public.

▼ Coach

# Act now to get ban scrapped

By Mike Morgan

FIGHTING the outside-lane ban and reminding the Government that it is a two-year trial ending on 31 December 1997 is the challenge facing coach operators.

The industry's trade association, the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK, has put it firmly on its agenda with a pledge that it will strive to prevent the ban from simply sliding into permanent legislation. And, speaking at CPT's annual dinner last week, secretary of state, Sir George Young, confirmed that the industry would be consulted.

CPT says it is building up a data base of statistical information to demonstrate to the Government the impact this change will have on coach operations, on the competitiveness of scheduled services, and on tourism.

Coach drivers were first confronted with the ban on New Year's Day and with commendable professionalism have kept problems down to a minimum.

However, the definition of which vehicles are affected has created some difficulties, with police and other road users assuming that small coaches under 7.5 tonnes GVW are also

excluded. Indeed some midcoach drivers have felt so intimidated that they have stayed in the middle lane, rather than overtake in safety and risk being stopped.

But these are early days and the industry needs to be in a strong position when it comes to decision time at the end of next year.

It must have sound data to present which demonstrates beyond all doubt the effects of the ban. We need a campaign to ensure that every coach operator in the land knows what is at stake. That campaign starts now.

We urge all companies who



## Sir George Young: promise

run coaches on Britain's motorways to keep 'before and after' records. Tachograph charts are an ideal source of information, whether you operate regularly or occasionally on motorways.

Express service operators will have timetables — before and after the ban.

Their drivers will be able to report incidents and passengers will have observations about longer journey times or reduced safety levels. But even if you run one trip a year along the M55 to Blackpool you will notice the difference. For the future of the industry we need to know.

If you have not already started, set up records now. Ask drivers to report their experiences, and note their difficulties. In next week's CBW we launch our *Scrap the Outside-Lane Ban* campaign.

Through this magazine we can work together to compile a dossier that will settle the argument once and for all.



▼ Coach and Bus

# MacIntosh to head merged Scania divisions



Don MacIntosh: 'dedicated to serve industry'

SCANIA GB has merged its Bus Division and Coach Sales Division into a single unit, and placed Don MacIntosh at its head.

Scania Bus and Coach (UK) is to be based at the current Workshop site, and 11 staff at Milton Keynes being asked to relocate. Current head of Scania's UK bus operations, Nick Leach, is also re-locating — to South Africa, where he'll be developing sales for the parent group.

"This is a very significant step for Scania's bus and coach operations," said Don MacIntosh, md at Workshop for the last two years. "From the customer's perspective, it means there is now one company dedicated to serve the industry but able to differentiate the various needs and respond to them."

Scania Bus and Coach will be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Scania GB. It currently com-

mands around nine per cent of the bus and coach market, and is the agent for the Irizar Century coach.

● Scania is to open a bus production plant in China in a 50/50 venture with Shandong Bus Corp. It is aiming for an annual production of 1,000 vehicles, and is part of a major sales drive into the Far East. In Taiwan, Scania has managed to secure almost 20 per cent of the total citybus market.





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*Dart*  
*Lance*



▼ Bus

## Bristol P&R starts March

THE first commercially-run park-and-ride car park, which has stood empty for months, will be opened in March, say its developers.

The Long Ashton park and ride in Bristol has been complete for nine months but contractual and planning difficulties have left commuters and shoppers on the busy corridor high and dry. Now, developers Avon Park and Ride say they may have cracked the problem.

"The delay has been caused by the demise of Avon County Council. As a result of this, we have had to start again, this time liaising with Bristol and Woodspring councils as well," said one of APR's directors, Alan Bowry. "We hope to have the political dealings out of the way within the month."

"We want this facility opened. Eagle Coaches has already ordered the seven vehicles we'll be using. The fares will be £1.50 return."

▼ Bus

## Bus driver is cleared

A FORMER bus driver had to be smuggled by police from Glasgow Sheriff Court last week after being cleared of causing an accident in which a teenager died.

Campbell Devlin was protected from angry relatives of 19-year-old Robert Currie, who died in August 1994 when his car was in collision with a bus driven by Mr Devlin.

Eighteen days later, Mr Devlin had again been the driver when a Clyde-side 2000 bus crashed into a bridge in Glasgow, killing three Girl Guides and two Guide leaders.

▼ Bus

# Rider invests in new image

## Better service and updated look

by Andrew Jarosz

NEW buses and a new distinctive livery for First-Bus' Rider Group subsidiary Leeds City Link were launched this week by the new managing director, Ray O'Toole, who promised a better standard of service through investment in new vehicles.

Sixty new single-decks are on order for the subsidiary, which became a separate trading division last September. Thirty new Plaxton-bodied Dennis Lances will follow 30 Plaxton-bodied Dennis Darts this Spring, and join 50 Darts and 10 Mercedes-Benz minibuses which were delivered last Summer.

Four of the 40-seat Darts will join the Quickstep low-cost unit, which

will share the same colours as the parent fleet.

Mr O'Toole said the £4.2 million investment, coming on top of the recent productivity package negotiated with staff, would add a bright modern image to bus services in the area.

"These vehicles incorporate modern technology with low-emission engines, and the warm-coloured livery will move away from the traditional greens and creams."

● Other Rider Group subsidiaries are also phasing in new liveries or colour schemes, but have yet to receive new vehicles. The Leeds single-decks will be the only full-



## New md and new liveries for City Link

sized buses purchased by the group this year, although 68 Darts and 48 Lances were shared by Leeds and Huddersfield

depots last year. Rider York received a separate order for Scania low-floor buses dedicated to three park-and-ride schemes.

▼ Coach

# Operator guilty of fraud

A FORMER Welwyn Garden City coach operator has been found guilty of fraud, and ordered to do 120 hours community service.

Graham Weeks, who ran North Mimms Coaches in Burrowfield during 1993, was convicted in a four-day trial last month of two counts of fraud and appeared for sentencing last week. During the trial, the court heard how Mr Weeks, 43, bounced cheques to his suppliers when his business ran into difficulty during 1993.

In March that year, he had tried to buy two coaches from Funston's Travel in Royston but the

cheque for £6,343 bounced after he had taken the coaches away. A Range Rover car which had been left at Funston's yard as security was found to belong to a finance company, and had a substantial amount of money owing on it, the jury was told by Dennis Giffard, prosecuting.

In another incident, Mr Weeks bounced a cheque for £4,406 to a firm in South Yorkshire, which had done engine reconditioning work.

Mr Weeks, of the Shires, Old Bedford Road, Luton - a choirmaster at Essendon Church - had pleaded not guilty to the two charges of evad-

ing liability by deception, claiming he did not know there were insufficient funds in his bank to cover the cheques.

"You had no agreed overdraft when you issued this cheque. You did so recklessly, and you knew it would not be honoured," assistant recorder Marrin QC said of the Funston's cheque. "These are serious offences of deception."

The court heard that some of the outstanding money had now been paid back, but that Mr Weeks is now bankrupt. North Mimms Coaches is in the hands of receivers.

▼ Bus

## Simpler system

GREATER Manchester's travelcard scheme has been relaunched as System One Travel.

The co-operative scheme involves more than 50 Manchester-based bus operators. It has been restructured, simplified and marketed heavily in a bid to increase passenger journeys.

System One Travel is being backed with regional advertising and public relations support, including the high-profile launch by It's a Knock-out's former presenter, Stuart Hall.

● For full details of the scheme, see next week's *Transit*.

CBW



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▼ Coach and Bus

# Dennis going electric

Agreement with Cummins heralds next generation

DENNIS parent, Trinity Holdings and Cummins have signed a five-year technical collaboration and supply agreement for the development of Dennis' next generation of vehicles, including coaches and buses.

The agreement comes in the wake of the first production Compressed Natural Gas-powered bus for FirstBus and it includes a project to develop an advanced design of elec-

by Mike Morgan

tric drive, low-floor bus powered by a Cummins diesel or low-emission gas engine.

Steve Burton, Trinity Holding's chief executive, said: "The agreement will bring Trinity the benefits of involving Cummins at the very beginning of our product development programme. This has become vital as



Burton (Trinity) and Sanford (Cummins)

emission standards have tightened and alternative fuels and power systems are introduced.

Dennis has used Cummins engines since 1986.

▼ Bus

## More body choice for Dart chassis

TWO additional body-builders are lined up to extend the bus operator's choice of body on the

mid-sized Dennis Dart SLF super-low-floor chassis, which has attracted around 500 orders since

its launch at the Coach & Bus show at the NEC last October.

Northern Ireland-

based, Robert Wright, has extended its low-floor range with Crusader on Dart and the revamped former WS Coachbuilders, now trading as UVG Bus Division, is using the Dart as the launchpad for its first entry to the low-floor arena with Cromwell stainless steel-framed UrbanStar body.

UVG sales director John Horn told CBW that initial demand for the UrbanStar on conventional Dart chassis had already exceeded total sales of its predecessor. However, plans to build on MAN 11.190 for Thamesdown have been "discontinued."



Going low-floor: UVG will develop UrbanStar for the Dennis SLF

▼ Coach and Bus

## Design by computer

MELLOR Coachcraft of Rochdale has unveiled the first benefits of its investment in Computer-Aided Design — with redesigned bodywork for Mercedes-Benz 811 and Iveco 59.12.

A one-piece roof is claimed to improve styling and new quick-detach side skirts incorporate a 'family-look' moulded profile stiffened by integral strakes.

▼ Coach and Bus

## Setra Kombibus adds low-floor bus to its range



Optimised: six-model integral line-up meets ECE R66 roll-over regs

SETRA has unveiled a low-floor bus as the latest development of its multi-purpose Kombibus range of vehicles. Output of the six-model range has hit the 750 mark since going into series production in 1995, including S315 GT flagship exhibited at Coach & Bus 95 last October to test potential for the UK for early 1997.

More recent additions to the range, shorter-length S313UL and 18-metre SG321UL

artic, have been joined by S315NF low-floor as the German manufacturer optimises its line-up of integral vehicles which meet ECE R66 roll-over.

Offset driveline on the 12-metre low-floor bus incorporates customised ZF beam-type rear axle with disc brakes. A choice of three rear-axle ratios and an option of ZF or Voith automatic gearbox is linked to Mercedes-Benz 250 bhp or 300 bhp engine.

CBW





**1989 (F) VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE**

ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma retarder, Autolube, 53 reclining seats including seat belts, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, radio/PA system **choice of 24, choice of 14** blue (3 sold) moquette, 14 brown (7 sold) orange moquette.

**1990 (G) VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE**

ZF 6 speed S690 manual gearbox, Telma retarder, Autolube, 49 reclining seats & crew seat, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, radio/PA system **choice of 2** brown/orange moquette.

**1991 (H) VOLVO B10M MKIII VAN HOOL ALIZEE**

ZF HP5000 Automatic gearbox, ABS, Autolube, 49 reclining seats including seats belts & crew seat, centre continental door, double glazed side windows with blinds courier seat, mid section servery/fridge & toilet, radio/PA system **choice of 11**, brown/orange moquette

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**SCANIA K113 VAN HOOL ALIZEE**

1994 (J) 53 reclining seats, seat belts, half rear emergency exit, double glazed side windows with blinds, radio/PA system, **SOLD**

**SCANIA K112 PLAXTON 4000**

1985 (C) 72 reclining seats, 2 courier seats, toilet, drinks, repainted white. New MOT.

**DAF SB 3000 VAN HOOL ALIZEE**

1989 (F) reclining seats, Webasto, drivers bunk, double glazing, foot rests, seat back nets, water boiler, fridge, curtains, carpets, wired for TV & video, sunken centre toilet, continental door, New MOT.

**SETRA TORNADO 215HD**

1992 (J) Man engine, 2F 7 speed gearbox, VBoith retarder, 49 reclining seats & courier seat, sunken centre toilet, continental door, Webasto heating, Sutrak air conditioning, servery unit with water boiler, front mounted fridge, radio/pa/system, 2 TV monitors and videos, drivers bunk, drivers door with wardrobe and central locking, New MOT.

**MAN JONCKHEERE**

1990 (G) Low driver 6 speed ZF gearbox, Sutrak air conditioning, 32 reclining seats with seat belts plus courier, radio/pa/cassette, 2 TV & videos, rear saloon toilet & servery, microwave, 3 fridges, hot & cold water, rear storage space, double glazed & curtains, 8 tables, wheel disc MOT New MOT.

**LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME**

1979 (H) 53 seats, tinted windows, power door exterior black/gold, brown moquette 14.11.96

**LEYLAND LEOPARD PLAXTON SUPREME**

1980 (H) 57 seats exterior black/gold, brown moquette MOT 16.10.96.

**1992 (J) SCANIA ELITE K113 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500**

7 speed manual GR801 comfort shift gearbox, ABS, road speed governor, variable top speed limiter, exhaust brake, kneel facility, ferry lift, autolube, electric retarder, Webasto heating, inswinging entrance door, Central continental door, centre toilet, half rear emergency door, 3 roof vents, forced air ventilation aircraft lockers, crew compartment, grey moquette, 49 reclining seats, centre gangway carpet, double glazed, side curtains, rear curtains, side blinds, aluminium wheels, Blaupunkt radio/PA system. MOT 13.09.96



**VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE SH**

1986 (D) 6 speed splitter gearbox, 28 reclining seats & courier seat, 8 tables, Sutrak air conditioning, Webasto, alloy wheels, radio/pa/cassette, 2 X TV & videos, rear saloon mounted toilet & rear kitchen with fridges, sinks, hot & cold water, over storage cupboard, rollio blinds, double glazed, New MOT.



**1989 (F) VOLVO B10MT PLAXTON 4000 RS**

65 reclining seats, TV/Video Stereo, toilet, double glazing, sun blinds, curtains, carpets, drinks, fridge, drivers bunk, crew seat, Telma retarder, brown/orange chevron moquette, curtains, exterior all white. new MOT.



**MAN JONCKHEER DEAUVILLE 16,290**

1989 (F) low driver 6 speed ZF gearbox, sutrak air conditioning, 32 reclining seats with seat belts plus courier, radio/pa/cassette, 2 TV & videos, rear saloon toilet & rear servery, 3 fridges, hot & cold water, rear storage space, double glazed & curtains, 8 tables, wheel discs, new MOT.





## ▼ Maintenance

# Absolute discharge a

**Magistrates accept Dorset Travel Services not to blame nor negligent but oper**



DORSET Travel Services was given an absolute discharge after admitting using a Volvo coach in a dangerous condition, after a wheel-loss incident. Devises Magistrates accepted the company had neither been to blame nor been negligent.

The company, of Transport Depot, Malard Road, Bournemouth, was ordered to pay £40 prosecution costs.

For the prosecution, David Jenkins said the coach concerned had been returning from a journey to Halifax on 11 July last when the rear nearside wheels became detached.

The rear wheels of the bus had been removed and replaced on 10 July by an employee of the Michelin Tyre Co, which was contracted to undertake all the company's tyre inspections. The fitter concerned had made a statement that he had changed the offside and nearside rear wheels and had refitted them using the bus company's torque wrench set at 450 lb/ft. He then gave the company a note saying which vehicles he had attended to. The

form he used contained a space for the company's fitter to show he had re-torqued and noted the setting.

Mr Jenkins argued that, though the prosecution accepted that this had been a case involving the unexplained "lost wheel syndrome", case reports in the commercial press should have put the company on warning that there could be a problem, and made it aware of the suggestion that wheels should be re-torqued 50 kilometres after replacement.

Engineering director Roger Cunningham said the company's policy had been to follow the manufacturer's handbook and set the torque wrench to 623 n/m, which roughly corresponded to the 450 lb/ft used by Michelin.

Volvo had not made any

by Michael Jewell

recommendation about re-checking for tightness after wheels had been replaced, but the company of its own accord had always re-torqued the wheelnuts after the next journey,



**DTS held to be blameless for wheel-loss incident**

## ▼ Licensing

## Revocation for partners



THE misuse of an O-licence identity disc has led to John and Patricia Lawton's O-licence being revoked. In addition, West Midlands traffic commissioner John Mervyn Pugh has banned the partners from holding or obtaining an O-licence for five years.

The Lawtons, of Unit D2, Rosehill Industrial Estate, Market Drayton, Shropshire, failed to appear at a Birmingham disciplinary inquiry. The commissioner said they held a restricted O-licence authorising the use of one minibus.

In July a DoT examiner carried out observations in the Crewe area. As a result he visited Ron Chard, who trades as CM Taxis, of Flat Lane, Crewe, Cheshire, and questioned him about the unauthorised use of a 12-seater minibus.

Mr Chard readily admitted he was the vehicle owner. He told the examiner he was applying for an O-licence but meanwhile had borrowed a licence identity disc from John Lawton. All efforts to contact Mr Lawton had failed.

## ▼ Maintenance

## Commissioner gives operator



IN cutting Ian Coward's O-licence authorisation from two vehicles to one, North Eastern deputy traffic commissioner Brian Horner said he was giving him one last chance to put his house in order.

Mr Coward, of Unit 1, Coney Park, Harrogate Road, Yeadon, Leeds, trading as Bestway Travel, of Leeds, appeared before the deputy commissioner at a Leeds disciplinary inquiry after the issue of prohibition notices and problems over drivers' hours.

Mr Coward said he had voluntarily reduced his authorised vehicles from four to two, having one single deck and one double deck, plus a training vehicle in possession. DoT vehicle examiner Robert Farr said he carried out a maintenance investigation after an accident in September in Bradford. The police had checked the vehicle involved and found excess travel on the brakes, oil contaminated brake linings and a low overall brake effort. He understood that proceedings were under consideration.

He examined two vehicles and issued two immediate prohibitions. One vehicle was prohibited for accident damage plus other defects. That vehicle had been last inspected in July, yet there was no reference to the rear brake linings. The second vehicle had three defects, one requiring immediate attention. The inspection records indicated that the

**The second vehicle had three defects, one of which required immediate attention**

average frequency between inspections was five to six weeks. The driver defect reporting system had been in use up until July.

Mr Coward thought the driver defect recording book was only for other drivers to use — as he was the owner and operator he did not need to use it. There were no skilled maintenance staff employed. Maintenance was said to be undertaken by an Ian

Mallinson. General repairs were undertaken by Mr Coward. Although he was not skilled he had said he had been in the business all his life. A third vehicle operated by Mr Coward was given a prohibition in March. That vehicle was one of his driving school vehicles.

If the inspections were being carried out as the records indicated they were not as thorough as they should be, said Mr Farr. In his opinion the vehicles seemed to be maintained on an ad-hoc basis. Mr Coward said the vehicle which received a prohibition in March 1995 was on a driving test when the power steering pipe burst, causing the inspector for the test to issue a prohibition. That was something that could go without warning.

After hearing that the propshafts on both the vehicles were falling off, the first vehicle having 10 of 10 propshaft flange bolts loose and the second eight of eight, Mr Horner said a propshaft that was loose was a safety critical matter of a very serious nature.



# After wheel loss

**Operator admits using Volvo coach in a dangerous condition**

however long or short that was.

The tyre fitter's note had not been handed in to the office until after he had finished his duty at 1pm and the vehicle had set off for Halifax at 8am. The driver was not aware then that the wheels on the vehicle had been removed and put back.

Whatever had appeared in the trade press in relation to goods vehicles, he had not been aware that anyone had recommended re-torquing after 50 kilometres until the vehicle examiner had told him of that suggestion in discussions following the accident.

The vehicle examiner had suggested re-torquing after half an hour before the vehicle went out, to allow for heat generated by the use of an impact gun on the wheelnuts to dissipate. The company had immediately introduced that suggestion into its system.

It had agreed with Michelin that wheelnuts would be removed and replaced manually with a torque wrench, without the use of an impact gun at all. It had also now ensured the

note of the work done on each vehicle by the tyre fitter was notified to the office as soon as each job was done, so it would be aware of any wheel change before the vehicle in question left the depot.

Defending, John Backhouse pointed out that, in 1957, the High Court, in the case of *Hart v Bex*, had stated that, in the case of an offence of strict liability, such as this, if the court found the defendant was not to blame and was not culpable, an absolute discharge was the appropriate way of dealing with the matter.

With the introduction of continuous licensing, prohibitions marked as showing neglect would go against the operator's record but, where a court had heard evidence and found the defendant not culpable, the traffic commissioner would disregard the conviction, which, of course, was inevitable in a case of strict liability. The distinction between even a low fine and a discharge was, therefore, important to the operator.



**'Re-torque after 50 km' says examiner**

# One last chance to put house in order

He had known propshafts to fall off vehicles and cause fatal accidents. Mr Coward had been very fortunate indeed if there were defects of that nature.

Asked about Mr Coward's nominated transport manager, Archibald Croft, Mr Farr said Mr Croft was an operator next door to Bestway Travel. He was no longer an operator though he

**Mr Horner said a propshaft that was loose was a safety critical matter of a very serious nature**

might still be around as an individual. He felt that, in the past, Mr Coward had his act together but recently had let things slip.

Mr Coward said Mr Croft was still the transport manager. He did some of the bookings, made sure they stayed legal and drove occasionally. They basically worked on hire to travel agents. They also covered breakdowns for other operators. The double

decker was mainly used on international work.

Mr Coward maintained there were only two propshaft bolts loose not eight but Mr Horner said it was a little unreasonable to disagree with the prohibition when Mr Coward had a copy for five months. He should have read the prohibition and disputed it at the time.

Asked about problems over drivers' hours, Mr Coward said they had done some work for a travel agent in Newcastle for trips to Austria. They used to spend most of their time picking up in Scotland and then have an overnight stay.

Normally they went through Germany but that particular travel agent routed them down through Switzerland. When they queried it, they were told that, if they went through Germany, they had to pay road tolls. The driver went the way the travel agents had planned and was over his hours on the first day. The travel agent then said he was not going to pay the bill as he had a lot of complaints from cus-

tomers about arriving late at the hotel. The agent said he would only pay half the bill. They took legal advice and the agent said he was going to report the driver to the traffic area, which he did.

Mr Horner said that, at the end of the day, Mr Coward was responsible for the driver and the scheduling of the driver's work. He had to make sure he was dri-

**At the end of the day, Mr Coward was responsible for the driver, Mr Horner said**

ving legally. Mr Coward said he had put a lot of time and effort into Bestway Travel. If he could not sort a maintenance problem out he got somebody in. It would appear he was going to have to be a little stricter with the garage to make sure things were being done correctly. The vehicles were not quite as bad as they sounded.

Financial evidence was heard in private at Mr Coward's

request. Mr Horner said he thought six weeks between inspections was inadequate due to the age of the vehicles and the nature of the work. He thought the inspection period should be four weeks at most. He was concerned about the flimsy maintenance arrangements and the inadequate system for reporting defects.

He took a very serious view of the defects, especially the propshafts where all the nuts were loose. It was a fair indication of lack of concern and attention to detail. Giving Mr Coward a severe reprimand, Mr Horner said he was curtailing the licence to one vehicle on grounds of maintenance and finance. The financial position was weak and would not sustain the operation of two vehicles. There would be a further fleet check before the end of July. If there were any doubts that matters had not been put right he would have only one option, that of revoking the licence, as Mr Coward would have lost his good repute, which, as it stood at the moment, was tarnished. **CBW**



## ▼ Europe

# It's Sunshine all the way

### Shearings expands European programme as bookings boom

SHEARINGS Holidays is poised to further increase capacity on its fast-growing European Sunshine Express programme following a sharp rise in bookings.

The coach holiday operator, which already has raised brochure capacity by 50 per cent to 20,000 compared to last Summer, is looking to further extend the programme by another 15 per cent.

Shearings has seen year-on-year sales increases of 30 per cent since

by William Golden

the launch of a dedicated Sunshine Express brochure a decade ago. The featured resorts span Spain's Costa Brava and Costa Dorada and the Venetian and Adriatic Rivas in Italy.

Keen pricing and a strong marketing support package have been backed up by special incentives, including free and half-priced places for children, single-parent discounts

and free pick-ups from 530 UK joining points. Brian Hawe, Shearings' product director for Europe, said: "Clearly the decision to go with a dedicated brochure has reaped swift rewards. We are one of the few tour operators to be increasing capacity for a European product this Summer.

"The new brochure has widened appeal for our product and enabled us to more accurately target the young families that form the core market for Sunshine Express."

## ▼ UK

# Biggest and best

THE East Anglia Tourist Board has just launched its biggest group travel directory. The 90-page brochure lists more than 200 places to visit and gives details of accommodation and meal stops. There also is information about coach parking at the major towns and cities throughout the region.

New for 1996 is a section on evening entertainment, with ideas for excursions ranging from ghost walks and drama tours, to medieval banquets and nightclubs. This year also sees a section on the suitability of venues for disabled visitors.

● Operators wanting a free copy of East Anglia for the Group Travel Organiser should contact Stephen Rampley, at the East Anglia Tourist Board, Topesfield Hall, Hadleigh, Suffolk IP7 5DN, tel 01473 824082 (fax 01473 823063).

CEW

## ▼ UK

# Operator mines a rich seam

ONE operator who is well aware of the benefits of attending the British Travel Trade Fair is Jane Bostock, of Bostock's Tours, in Congleton, Cheshire. This year marks her sixth successive visit and Jane said: "If you miss this show, you miss information that you can't pick up sitting in the office."

"Recently, I had to wait 10 days for a destination's group manual I had requested to arrive by post. At BTTF, I can get the latest manuals and leaflets in one go - I am renowned for going round lugging carrier bags full of brochures."

Back in Congleton, these go straight into an



**Ideas:** Jane Bostock information system that Jane uses to plan tours, and to develop ideas to pass on to private hire customers.

Jane, who is 28, was brought up in the family business, which was founded by her grandfa-

ther in 1919. He started with two coal lorries and converted them to charabancs at weekends.

Seventy seven years on, Bostock's has 40 coaches and Jane puts together a year-round tour programme, which is sold direct and through local ABTA travel agents.

Regular customers are always looking for new options and Jane said: "At BTTF, I will be especially interested in meeting exhibitors from the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands."

After business, Jane likes to meet fellow operators at social events. "I've

already got a new dress for the CTC charity ball on the Wednesday evening," she added.

Tickets are £45 each or £400 for a table of 10. Operators wanting tickets should contact CTC secretary Derrick Alsop on 0115 973 2260.

● BTTF 96 will be held at the Birmingham NEC on Wednesday and Thursday, 27 and 28 March. Order your complimentary tickets now by ringing the hotline on 01844 262728, quoting reference BTTF/COL



# Eurowatch

## WEATHER

## DIESEL PRICES

## HOLIDAY POUND

City	Average temperature last week	City	Average temperature last week	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Diesel price per litre in Sterling	Country	Currency exchange rate	Country	Currency exchange rate
				(Courtesy AA Roadwatch)							
Athens	14C/57F	Madrid	14C/57F	Austria	0.58	Netherlands	0.54	Austria	15.35 Sch/£	Italy	2,380 Lire/£
Amsterdam	-4C/25F	Oslo	-7C/19F	Belgium	0.54	Norway	0.70	Belgium	45.25 BFr/£	Netherlands	2.48 Gld/£
Berlin	-6C/21F	Paris	1C/34F	Eire	0.53	Poland	0.23	Denmark	8.55 K/£	Norway	9.68 Nkr/£
Brussels	-1C/30F	Rome	9C/48F	France	0.50	Portugal	0.45	Eire	0.95 Punt/£	Portugal	230 Es/£
Dublin	6C/43F	Stockholm	-5C/23F	Germany	0.51	Spain	0.45	France	7.54 Fr/£	Spain	185.5 Pta/£
Lisbon	15C/59F	Vienna	-8C/18F	Italy	0.54	Sweden	0.64	Germany	2.21 DM/£	Sweden	10.69 SKr/£
Luxembourg	-6C/21F	Zurich	-2C/28F	Luxembourg	0.45	Switzerland	0.65	Greece	370 D/£	Switzerland	1.79 SFr/£



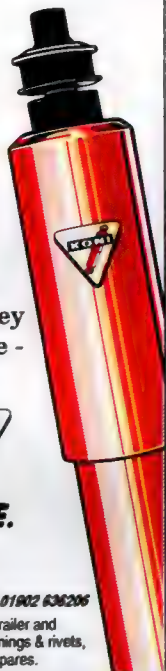
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# More thoughts on carriage of pupils

**I**T is clear from the letters I have received that the conduct problems involved in the carriage of school-children are huge, escalating, and almost certainly worse in some parts of the country than in my particular area. In South Wales, Manchester, London and Liverpool the mayhem seems to be particularly acute.

I hear of drivers losing sleep in anticipation of driving on school journeys where to inspect a bus pass can result in being spat at; a refusal to make unscheduled stops resulting in pupils exiting from the emergency door; of traffic accidents being caused through being distracted by pupils' behaviour and (a particularly recurring complaint) that cash or personal possessions are hijacked from the cab area if drivers go back down the vehicle in an attempt to maintain some semblance of order.

I have not yet received a letter rubbishising my suggestions of two weeks ago - but doubtless will before long. I can only repeat that they worked for me and that, although I do agree that having an escort or a conductor may assist in reducing unacceptable behaviour or vandalism, policing will never stop the determined miscreant and will not prevent pupils spitting at each other, or on the vehicle - another objectionable and recurrent theme in the letters I have received.

As events in Ireland, and many other trouble spots in the world, so graphically demonstrate: law and order cannot be maintained by enforcement authorities alone. Order and discipline can only be maintained in any society, in a school, or on a coach or bus, by it being the will and wish of the majority.

## What's it for?

FROM July EC driving licences with photographs will start to be issued. No doubt it will be some years before all drivers have one. In anticipation of that day, I again offer the idea that I would like to see it mandatory for such a driving licence to be displayed on the windscreen at all times when a person is driving. There are far too many instances of people driving without a licence, or while disqualified, for my liking. An indestructible, credit card type of photographic licence is too good an enforcement opportunity to be missed.

The bad news, unless it has changed since I was last updated, is that these plastic masterpieces will not show endorsements. In the rush to create a pseudo-identity card someone may have forgotten the real purpose of the driving licence!

That is why I fervently believe that what we all have to do to get pupil conduct back into control is to win over hearts and minds - not to try to pretend to wield imaginary big sticks.

Let us be realistic: there is no prospect whatsoever of wholesale funding for escorts on school contracts being made by Government, schools, or local authorities. Indeed, I would strongly urge caution in rocking the school transport boat lest it sinks altogether. Scrapping the 1944 Education Act duty on educational authorities to provide school transport is, I fear, something which the Government could well do if pushed into a corner. To make parents accept personal responsibility



**Under threat: free school transport**

ty to get their children to school seems to sit quite comfortably in this particular basket.

The conduct of our passengers is our problem. We have to solve it for ourselves. Although society is becoming less disciplined and more aggressive, I do think that operators and drivers may have contributed to this teaser. For far too long we have just pulled up, let

them pile on, and hoped for the best. We are now reaping the harvest of this indifference to our passengers.

I am indebted to another operator who has passed to me a positive idea which is breathtakingly simple, yet capable of checking this matter at a stroke - at least on contract services. My contact says he has been doing it for years and has no conduct problems whatsoever. His suggestion: Seat Allocation.

The way he does it is thus; on the first day of the school year pupils are allowed to sit where they like. On the second day they are asked if they wish to change seats and, if they do, every effort is made to comply with their wish.

They are then allocated the place in which they are sitting and their names and addresses logged on a seating chart. With the co-operation of the school (which also has copies of this chart and verifies the correctness of the names and addresses) copies of it are sent to parents with a letter advising that they and their offspring will be held responsible for any damage done to the allocated seat and the immediate environment. Pupils, therefore, are given an incentive to sit in the correct seat and to be guardians of it - ie to prevent any of their peers damaging or soiling it.

Needless to say, the seat has to be in good repair before the journey commences - as I suggested two weeks ago. If, for any reason, that is impossible, a note needs to be kept of the earlier damage etc.

It does involve just a little organisation and effort and liaison with the school.

## Performing rights: don't forget, two sets of fees

THE Monopolies & Mergers Commission has recently reported after a year long investigation into the Performing Rights Society. This investigation was triggered by, as *The Times* put it, "long-running complaints from struggling and well-known composers including Lionel Bart and the Irish rock group U2." The MMC report makes more than 40 recommendations, mainly designed to improve the efficiency of PRS and thus to deliver more proceeds to composers and songwriters.

Unless I am much mistaken, this will mean a purge on struggling and well-known coach operators, as well as a vast multitude of not so well known operators who have kept their heads down and remained invisible non-

payers to this (un)worthy cause! It is perhaps an appropriate moment to remind readers that the PRS has a sort of dual scale of fees for coaches - the discounted one is for voluntary payment and the full whack for those who get caught.

Needless to say, getting caught can involve prosecution and retrospective payment (at the non-discounted rate). The PRS has effectively been told to get out and get more. Don't say that nobody warned you!

As one who pays honestly (well nearly!) I cannot get too worked up about the non-payers getting their collars felt - even though I share the detestation of PRS common to most readers.





# Is this making the most of marketing?

**M**AKING the best of every marketing opportunity clearly involves blackboards and blue chalk for this operator. The wire grille on the window, the black-painted wooden hut, and the barely-vi-

ble coil of barbed wire along the fence seem somehow incongruous against the promise of the sunny climes of Jersey and Spain.

Who could fail to have total confidence (sic) in such an ambitious advertising project?



# Stop that gobby stop

AN errant computer hacker was apparently responsible when a Leeds' bus stop announcement system suddenly went 'gobby', and mouthed obscenities at passers-by.

That problem was quickly solved, but then another surfaced. The original electronic voice was actually that of radio presenter Rowan Morton-Gledhill who, though educated at a comprehensive school, was deemed too 'plummy' for the people of Yorkshire. He was phased out on the grounds that

he sounded like a southerner, and a mild Yorkshire accent phased in.

Should the same zeal for local accents surface when Dorset gets its first talking bus stop, this week's diarist predicts it would sound something like this:

"Tis ten minutes 'fore yer'll be gettin' thik Blan'ford bus. 'Ers got 'n where 'er cassn't back 'n 'assn't, m'dears, so 'old on woi 'er gets 'n' out." Clear as a bell... if you come from Daarset.

# Time for a rummage

REMEMBER that less-than-wonderful bus company tie you were proudly presented with? You know, it's the one at the back of the wardrobe gathering dust.

But you couldn't bear to part with it, even though you never wear it. So salve your conscience and part with the tie painlessly by sending it to Margaret King, area traffic assistant at Lon-

don Transport Buses, who is assembling two wall hangings exclusively made from bus company ties.

Rummage in your drawers, have a grope around your chest, and dig those old ties out. They'll end up at Cobham and LT's museums, preserved for all time. Contact Margaret on 0181 746 3506.



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## LETTER OF THE WEEK



# Up to all in industry to fight our corner

From Dennis Noble

I read with some dismay David Ogden's letter (*CBW*, 3 February) and wonder if we belong to the same trade association (CPT) and, while I do not think the letters page of *CBW* is the correct vehicle for his concerns, may I make a few points?

1. The effort and time many of us in CPT put in to defend or fight for the industry cannot be measured, whether it is on committee working parties, answering press inquiries (on Hogmanay) or the myriad of other matters which arise and have arisen over the last five years or so.

2. There are certain issues where the Government is determined to act come what may: road building, privatisation, poll tax, water industry etc — the list is endless. All the furore, all the publicity, demonstrations,



press coverage, wall to wall — none of it mattered — they did what was politically expedient.

To suggest that CPT could stop the publicity roller-coaster that arose when people were being killed in my view is naive and there are countless instances where, if CPT had not acted, they would have been much worse.

3. Members of this industry themselves have a key role in fighting our corner, lobbying their own MPs and communicating the CPT position to their local media etc, it can-

is desired by all major providers of public transport, and forms part of the high-quality offer we must make to the travelling public if we are to reverse the decline in public transport usage. Of course, this will be difficult to achieve, but to simply claim they are "beloved of idealists but... simply can't be achieved in the typical town street" is to admit defeat before we have started.

Light Rapid Transit schemes are so valuable because they are flexible, using old railways, new construction (including grade separation if necessary) and the public highway. They require a systematic approach to their development and provide the potential rider with an integrated system which is a real alternative to the private car.

Of course, these systems are expensive and can, probably, only be justified in the busier towns and cities. For smaller places something less expensive, but which provides at least some of the benefits of a rail-based LRT scheme, will be needed. In these areas a trolley/duo bus system may be the answer. A number of such systems are operating or being developed elsewhere in the European Union and the South Yorkshire PTE and London Transport are studying their potential.

However, the system will require continuous power feed in the busiest sections of the route and a high degree of segregation from traffic congestion. The Gyrobus experiment, mentioned in Mr Walker's letter, failed in large part because the vehicles were delayed to such an extent in traffic that they were not able to reach the next charging point before the flywheel ran down.

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Letter of the week wins a Corgi Classics model bus

not all be left to Sardinia House. We are only as strong as our members make us.

Dennis Noble  
Managing director  
Vice president CPT  
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Weir's Tours  
Clydebank

## People Mover niche

From Scott McIntosh

I was intrigued by the letter from Gordon Walker (*CBW*, 6 January) headlined 'Trolleys Best'. I am pleased that he wishes John Parry and his People Mover well. I am convinced there is a significant niche in the market for this form of transit vehicle and I look forward to seeing it gain its first order.

The fact the development has been carried out without any Government assistance speaks volumes for John's persistence and courage (I should add that I have no financial interest in the firm).

Gordon Walker is on rather shakier ground in the rest of his letter. The rolling resistance of rubber tyres is considerably higher than that of steel wheels and can have a significant effect on vehicle energy consumption, an important consideration with all stored-energy systems.

His claims about the disadvantages of rail are also poorly founded. Modern trams are extremely quiet (experiments in Nantes showed that a 30-metre tram generated less noise than a single saloon car), braking efficiency is extremely high when track brakes are used (and with no risk of skidding). I can also say that, in over 30 years of visiting and observing tramways, I have only seen one occasion on which a cyclist had any trouble with tracks in the street.

A trackway predominantly clear of obstruction by other, less efficient, road users

Scott McIntosh  
Light transit development manager  
London Transport  
55 Broadway  
London, SW1

## Legislation answer

From: Andrew Richmond

Mark Williams' article regarding the increasing age profile of PSVs was very interesting and posed the question: "Does the answer lie with operators, government or the public?"

While the answer probably lies with all three, the underlying problem is the lack of surplus funds to invest in new vehicles, but how do we change this?

Coach operators have been slow in getting the message across to hirers that new vehicles are far safer and worth paying a little extra for. Safety features such as seatbelts can provide the hirer with a tangible benefit that can be obtained when hiring a newer safer vehicle. There are many less obvious benefits, such as lower pollution, anti-lock braking, increased rollover strength, that are not so easy to put across to potential hirers. Operators should make better use of these features in their publicity if they are going to get better prices.

Members of the public are not coach and bus experts and by and large do not know what to look for when hiring or travelling on a PSV. They assume all vehicles and operators are the same and that our industry is strictly regulated in a similar way to that of an airline.



It is, therefore, up to operators of newer, safer vehicles to promote the fact they are not to be judged solely by the prices they charge but, more importantly, by the standards they operate. Until the public becomes more aware of the benefits of travelling in newer vehicles will they be prepared to pay the premium for doing so? While I would like to see the Government give further encouragement for operators to buy new vehicles (increasing capital allowances etc) I do not think the industry should rely upon it to find a solution to its underfunding.

Significant technical improvements have taken place during recent years and there is an argument that older vehicles should be scrapped. Safety legislation has in most cases not been made retrospective and this leaves a considerable gap in standards. Perhaps it would be a good thing to make new legislation apply to all PSVs as this would make it uneconomic to bring the oldest vehicles up to standard and encourage the alternative of buying a new vehicle?

Andrew Richmond  
Epsom Coaches  
Epsom  
Surrey

## Knock-on effect

From Brian Evans

Regarding your article (CBW, 3 February) concerning the increase in the age profile of the UK coach and bus fleet. This ageing trend has a knock-on effect in terms of the availability of suitable vehicles for training to Driving Standards Agency category D, and D + E test standard.

Currently, to enable an individual to obtain a Category D PCV entitlement the Minimum Test Vehicle (MTV) has to be at least nine metres long, capable of achieving 80 kph and have a manual transmission gearbox. The D + E MTV is similar but with a drawn trailer.

The problem for training providers, either commercial or in-house, has been the ability to obtain a qualifying vehicle of recent manufacture. Over the last decade or so manufacturers have produced large buses predominantly with semi or fully automatic gearboxes. Those vehicles with manual transmission have tended to be mini or midibuses falling short of the minimum length requirement.

There have, of course, been coaches manufactured that meet the MTV requirement but, because they are usually built to a higher specification, they are uneconomic to operate for training purposes.

I understand that, in recent years the national pass rate for PCV candidates has fallen. I believe this can be attributed in no small measure to the age of the training fleet. Obviously this ageing of the fleet will contribute to an increase in down time linked to the difficulty in obtaining replacement parts for these older vehicles.

Later this year the Driving Standards Agency will be reviewing existing PCV testing arrangements. It would, therefore, be appropriate for the industry to consider what changes

might be necessary to recommend to DSA to overcome the problem highlighted above. My own view is that a reduction in the minimum length requirement will offer an opportunity for PCV trainers to access a wider range of suitable and relatively more modern vehicles.

Can I through the medium of your publication ask any other PCV training organisations to contact me with a view to establishing whether or not the difficulties I see can be overcome in the manner I suggest.

Brian Evans  
Skillplace Training Limited  
Port Talbot  
West Glamorgan

## The 'green' challenge

From Alan Sledmore

It is a requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 to carry out a risk assessment of work activity, moreover, reduce any foreseeable hazard or risk. It should, therefore, follow that government would use such a procedure when implementing new legislation.

There is an abundance of evidence to support the need for minibus D1 licence tests which is effective from 1 July. However, grandfather rights enable existing drivers to retain entitlement to drive minibuses.

Yet there is no evidence to support the need to restrict PCV drivers who wear spectacles, yet grandfather rights will not be allowed where higher eyesight standards are required for bus drivers. Contrary to popular belief the ruling is a British Government issue not an EC Directive. A second EC Directive allows grandfather rights on this issue, therefore, it is my belief this ruling should be challenged in the European Court.

Where Steven Norris gets his 0.02 per cent job loss figure from is just as amazing as his belief that the outside lane ban on more than three-lane motorways is in the interests of safety. We need less inexperienced drivers, not more, not to mention the training, redundancy, and compensation costs to the industry. Then there is the seatbelt issue.

Who is going to enforce it, if the driver has to keep an eye on misbehaving children who are not wearing seatbelts, then the hazard would far outweigh the benefits. If strapping children into seats is what is required, straight-jackets are more the order of the day.

There should be a minimum standard required before operators are allowed to tender for school or indeed any registered service. The ISO 9002 quality standard should be considered. It was refreshing to see Impact Coaches qualify with other operators seeking to achieve that distinction.

However, we ought now to be looking to achieve the BS7750 environmental standard, likewise registration to the Eco-Management Audit Scheme (EMAS), this with a view to achieving the International Organisational Environmental Standard ISO 14001.

This is the way forward and at last it seems as though some operators have seen the

light, as recent poor media coverage has shown there should be no room for the inadequate operator to manoeuvre.

There is a massive environmental challenge to overcome. We need to meet that challenge and produce a transport system that past and present Governments have failed to achieve, a fully integrated transport system.

Alan Sledmore  
Health and safety representative  
Hest Bank  
Lancaster

## Put public need first

From Martyn Bacon

Professor Hibbs' letter (CBW, 13 January) fails to answer any of the points raised in my letter (CBW, 16 December).

The fact remains that this country is crying out for an efficient, cheap, reliable and fully-integrated public transport system, and market forces and privately-owned bus groupings have failed to provide it while a succession of our big city centres, Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield, have been flooded with fleets of elderly Atlanteans and Nationals, in rural areas, services have dwindled and in some cases disappeared.

While the two most senior directors of Britain's largest privately-owned bus groups are regularly quoted in the national press as among Scotland's top earners, they are apparently unable to give their staff even the smallest annual bonus or incentive (CBW, 6 January).

For many years London Transport was widely regarded as one of the world's foremost transport undertakings, and many of its greatest achievements were made under public ownership.

I am sure that Professor Hibbs has devoted much time and effort over the years to his studies, but no amount of theorising, even at such august institutions as the Universities of London and Birmingham, is any real substitute for practical experience in the field.

I would recommend him to read a copy of *The British Bus Story, The Early Eighties* written by the well-respected transport author Alan Townsin and published by TPC in 1992 for an authoritative account of the damage done to the British bus industry by a small number of politically motivated individuals.

Sadly, for the manufacturing side of the business, it is already too late. In 1979, over 5,000 new PSVs entered service in Britain, 95 per cent of them British made. Today, we are totally dependent on foreign imports.

Only a properly integrated public transport network, funded by Government grants and subsidy can begin to solve this nation's transport problems.

Let's hope that, in the not too distant future, public need will be put before private interest.

Martyn Bacon  
Uckfield  
East Sussex



# Why the Blue Li

**T**HE Solent Blue Line driver was having a joke with his mates in the minuscule information kiosk. I asked him for directions to the offices. "Certainly Sir," he chimed. "Just down the road there, the door on the right, just before you get to our travel shop." I thanked him. "No problem."

The aluminium-framed door leading to an anonymous stairwell and ageing lift seemed all too familiar. Another small bus company, I thought as I climbed the stairs. Two hours later, as I descended them, I had changed my mind. Operations director Peter Shelley was the man who changed my mind. Not because he told me about the incredible investment his company has made in new buses. Not because he laid an impressive profit figure in front of me (he didn't). Not even because he plied me with drink (but thanks for the coffee).

What we talked about, largely speaking, was passengers - their thoughts, their needs, the types of passenger, and where they want to go. It's this subject which intrigues Peter Shelley, and is the key to the development of Solent Blue Line such that it can afford the new buses, can show consistent profit, and has plenty of coffee.

"The challenge was to get our business to grow in our own geographical area," he says. "To do this, we had to get daytime bus frequencies up."

He speaks from the standpoint of an operator who is hemmed in by the 'big boys' - Stagecoach being the biggest, along the potentially lucrative eastern corridor. It would be all too easy to let claustrophobia and depression set in.

"What we have now is, in round terms, a 30-minute service during the day, evenings and on Sundays. There are a few holes in the evening service, but there are buses run until 11.20 pm from Southampton."

Not that Solent Blue Line has been flying blind on its blanket bombing raid. Peter Shelley has seen to it that one survey has followed another in a programme to map people's need: "I suppose it's a typical traffic manager's instinct to do surveys," he says.

And just such a survey dissuaded SBL from ending its ticket agencies and issuing

tickets centrally. It might have saved cash in the short term, as would the introduction of magnetic 'swipe' tickets, but it would have been a journey taken at SBL's peril.

"People seem to prefer to buy tickets from a shop at leisure," he says. They don't know what ticket they want. And it might be sexist, but the women passengers who take our buses aren't really technology-friendly," he adds. Nor, by definition, is he convinced that swipe cards are particularly women-friendly yet, though it's something he is watching with very keen interest.

What definitely IS passenger-friendly is ensuring route maps and timetables are easy to read, putting conductors on city centre routes, chipping into local charities and organisations, having a Freepost address, and never letting

**Solent Blue Line is very much the meat in a Stagecoach sandwich, but down in Southampton, it's the staple diet for many passengers. Mark Williams reports**

up in the marketing battle on the housing estates.

"I have to say that buses work best in poorer areas," he says. "These are people who pay us back. Large families and single mothers are the best friends of this business."

Now, 13 million passenger journeys are taken by SBL every year. That's 70 per cent up on the post-deregulation figure. Fares in real terms have had to come down. And that means the turnover hasn't risen by anything like the same proportion, standing at around £5.5 million.

But it hasn't prevented investment in buses. In total, £4 million has gone the way of the bus dealers. Of a mixed fleet of 95 vehicles, 24 are less than two years old, and two thirds of them were bought new by SBL.

"The biggest part of our investment has been that made in minibuses," says Mr Shelley. "They are now a third of the fleet, but a very substantial part of our policy is converting full-sized buses to minibuses."

Yes, that's got early-nineties overtones, when the name of the game was keeping capital expenditure down. But for Mr Shelley, it's got a lot more to do with keeping bus frequency up. Extending the tendrils of SBL into housing estates, and into roads designed for seventeenth-century horses, is often made possible by minibuses. Take, for example, the four Alexander Striders on B10B which SBL bought last year to replace its Nationals. They proved to be two feet too long on one route for which they were intended.

The 22 Mellor Iveco 59.12s bought in the last two years do the job much better, particularly as they have a 29-seat configuration carefully specified by SBL. Fuel economy is 10 per cent better Mercedes-Benz 811s they replaced. And perhaps more importantly, these 30 per cent of vehicles now generate half the 1.6 million kilometres SBL buses travel.

But I can tell you're still not convinced SBL has done anything out of the ordinary with its bus services. So let's look at its marketing services.

Marketing, for some obscure reason perhaps rooted in NBC days, is something about which many bus companies appear to know precious little. SBL has taken this bull by the proverbial horns and, using resources from its parent company, Southern Vectis, plus some of its local knowledge, has used it to build some healthy business.

Pondering the question of why SBL had enjoyed this organic growth, the company came to the conclusion that marketing is one of its strengths, and that investment in marketing makes as much sense (if not more sense) as investment in buses. Given that you can't market services you



**Ivecos have cut maintenance costs by 40 per cent**



# ne isn't thin

cannot run, the answer was franchising.

SBL takes a percentage cut of the takings on Marchwood Motorways' and Brian Tours' 15 buses (all in SBL colours), and their bonus a share of the market without the marketing and planning spend, and without the competition. From SBL's viewpoint, franchising puts 15 per cent in the turnover pot.

Putting its engineering resource to work has also benefited SBL. Indeed, as the fleet gets younger, the need for SBL's commercial engineering decreases. The little Ivecos, which replaced five-year-old Mercedes 811s, brought a 40 per cent saving in annual maintenance costs - from £2,600 per vehicle, they tumbled to £1,600. Which left skilled fitters under-employed, until SBL looked around for more contract work and found it.

Peter Shelley and his team leave few stones unturned in the quest for efficiency. The more efficient SBL becomes - and it's a very lean company - the more bus marketing it can afford, and the bigger the company can grow. It satisfies modest profit aims with the aim of increasing passenger depen-

dence on bus services, and that's why it can live alongside the big boys without offending them.

"We value our independence," says Mr Shelley. "We have a lot of freedom to use our local knowledge, and I worry that, if we were part of a nationwide group, we

**'Fortunately, the big groups acquire companies on a 'willing to sell' basis. We don't want to sell Solent Blue Line'**

couldn't respond so quickly to our passengers. The blunt truth is that central planning is not closely aligned with what people want, as was proved in NBC days.

"Fortunately, the big groups acquire companies on a 'willing to sell' basis. We don't want to sell Solent Blue Line."



**Shelley: 'traffic manager's instinct to do surveys'**



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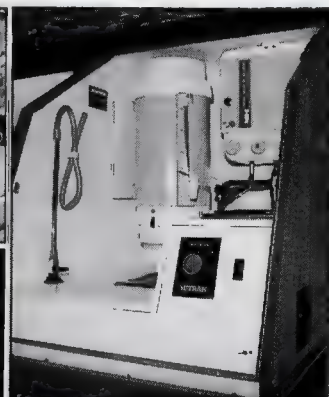
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1993 K DAF SM230LT Van Hool Alizee 'H',  
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1992 J DAF SB2305 Duple 340, 57R  
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51R/Toilet  
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'SH', 53R/Toilet  
1990 G MB230LB Van Hool Alizee 'H'  
1990 G DAF SB3000 Van Hool 'SH', 49/Toilet  
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH', 53R  
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee 'DH',  
51R/Toilet  
1989 F DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet  
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 53R  
1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet  
1989 F DAF DHTD Duple 320SL, 51R/Toilet  
1988 E DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee, 51R/Toilet  
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1989 SB3000 Plaxton 3500, 51/Toilet  
1988 E DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee 'DH',  
51R/Toilet  
1988 F SB3000 Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R/Toilet  
1987 E SB2300 Plaxton 3200, 55 seats, air  
conditioned  
1987 E SB3500 Plaxton, 53R, air conditioned  
1987 E DAF SB2300 Plaxton 3500, 53R, air  
conditioned  
1987 D DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee 'H', 49R/Toilet  
1987 D DAF SB230LB Duple 340, 53R  
1987 D VAN HOOL T815, 51/Toilet  
1986 C DAF MB200FL Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet

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## SCANIA

# A rocking £32,000 interior

## Len Wright Band Buses gets its first Centurys

AMERICAN rock band Bon Jovi will be the first to get the benefit of Len Wright Band Buses' investment in these two Irizar Centurys.

Not that they will faintly resemble these vehicles, pictured just before delivery. Every seat will be removed, the windows 'gilded' with reflective film, and £32,000-worth of new fixtures and fittings will fill the interior.

Hampshire-based Skylark Motors will add 10 bunk beds, a rear lounge, full kitchen and tabling. Beneath the surface, the vehicles will get extra water tanks,



by Mark Williams

generators and the usual paraphernalia associated with vehicles which will be part of the superstars' accommodation on tour. Skylark will accomplish all of this in 12 weeks.

These are the first Centurys for Watford-based Len Wright

Band Buses - a company bought from Cantabrica by its three top drivers. The coaches join a mixed fleet of nine others - Plaxton, Van Hool Astra and Jonckheere Deauville coaches, similarly equipped for this unusual branch of the industry.

"The Centurys are being built specifically for the Bon Jovi tour," said operations director Les

Collins. "We liked them straight away - they're good for us. They look good, are high-roofed, and the price was reasonable."

They are the only tri-axled single decks in the fleet.

The Centurys are expected to have a fleet life of around five years, but twin-decks are expected to last a little longer.



## MOSELEY

# Striking Caetano added to Dunn-Line's fleet

DUNN-LINE'S East Midlands Airport contract is being served by this Caetano Optimo III.

The 21-seat midicoach will be joining a fleet of taxis on the aircrew service which was won by the Nottingham company last October. Its striking livery is a clever, in-house designed

pattern of vinyls, which allows Dunn-Line to take vehicles in delivery white, and sell them more easily when they reach the end of their service life.

Dunn-Line runs more than 50 full-size buses and coaches.

CBW

## OPTARE

# Chosen for quality

ULSTERBUS is running four new Optare MetroRiders on its Belfast Airport shuttle.

The vehicles have 24 Lazerini high-back luxury coach seats with seatbelts, a three-tier luggage rack and a mobile phone. They have the standard Cummins 6B turbocharged engine, coupled with Allison AT545 automatic transmission and retarder.

"We have chosen the MetroRider because of design flexibility, the high quality of finish and the total product back-up offered by Optare and its after-sales division, UniTec," said Ulsterbus chief engineer Mel McGreevy. The vehicles replace Mercedes 811D-based buses.





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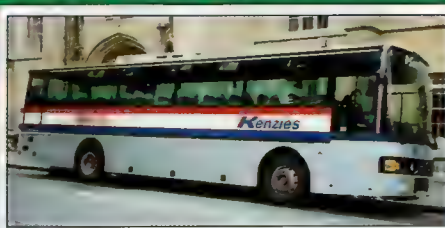


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## 1994 B6R CAETANO

34 R/S + courier, curtains/carpet to  
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door, continental door, proper little coach,  
MoT February '96

£72,500 + VAT

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## BOVA FUTURA FLD (Executive)

47 reclining seats plus courier, centre sunken toilet, hot drinks  
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1	1989	£87,500
1	1990	£92,500

BOVA FUTURA, 51/55 recliners + courier seat,  
double glazed, radio/PA, video, fridge, coffee  
machine, demountable toilet, full Suttrak air  
conditioning.

2	1990	£92,500
---	------	---------



BERKHOF EXCELLENCE 1000, MAN 11.190,  
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radio/PA, double glazed, video, fridge, coffee  
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£109,500



NEOPLAN CITYLINER MERCEDES 90'H, 49  
recliners + double courier seat, drivers bunk, under  
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'87 SCANIA K112 PLAXTON  
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'88 SCANIA K112 VAN HOOL  
ALIZEE, 49 R + C, toilet

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'88 LEYLAND TIGER 290 DUPL  
340, 55 R + C, R/P/C

'88 DAF SB2300 CAETANO  
ALGARVE, 53 R + C, R/P/C

'89 SCANIA K93 DUPL 320,  
55 R + C, R/P/C

'89 DAF DHTD DUPL 320,  
53 F + C, toilet

'91 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON  
3500, 51 R + C, toilet

'91 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON  
3500, 53 R + C, R/P/C

'92 SCANIA K93 VAN HOOL  
ALIZEE, 55 R + C, R/P/C

'92 MERCEDES 0303 PLAXTON  
3500, 49 R + C, toilet

'92 SCANIA K113 PLAXTON  
3500, 51 R + C, toilet

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(N. Midlands)

(60837/BE)

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1987 E REG, TOYOTA OPTIMO, 6 cylinder, 18 seater + 1, large boot, blue int, power door, test Jan 97 .....£13,500

1990 RENAULT TRAFIC, diesel, 12 seater, test Oct 1996 .....£4,500

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NON PSV

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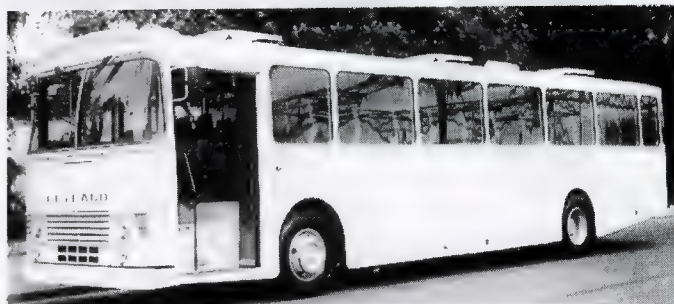
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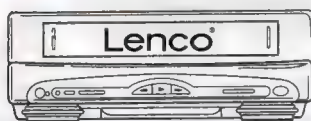
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Fax: (01234) 354298

(60047/SBE)

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## STEAMY WINDOWS

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Exchange units available

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24 hour turnaround.

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Fax: 01253 798443

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## COACH AND BUS WEEK

### Classified Deadlines

Booking .....TUESDAY 1600

Bookings requiring Proofs .....MONDAY 1200

.....MONDAY 1200

Cancellation .....MONDAY 1200

.....MONDAY 1200

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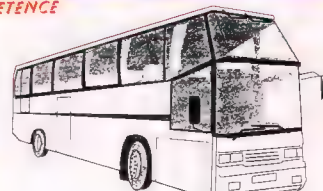
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FULL SPRAY BAKE AND TWO PACK FACILITIES FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES.

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No need to get your hands dirty, all our parts are cleaned, guaranteed and on the shelf ready for pick up. We can offer you a free delivery to some areas, so if you are looking for quality used diesel and petrol engines, axles, gearboxes, springs, wheels, tyres, cabs, doors, panels, injector pumps, lift pumps, blocks, cranks, heads, propshafts etc contact us today. We also stock all types of electrical parts, so if you are having trouble with that hard to get part Erith Commercial are the people to see.

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Coach and Bus Week ending 17 February 1996

## Service Exchange DIESEL ENGINES

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- MAN 280/320
- CUMMINS L10. C Series + B Series
- ALL OTHER MAKES CATERED FOR

Fitting Service, Nationwide Recovery.  
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## COACH AND BUS WEEK

### Classified Deadlines

Booking .....TUESDAY 1600

Bookings requiring Proofs .....  
.....MONDAY 1200

Cancellation .....  
.....MONDAY 1200



## VEHICLE SPARES

### OFF THE SHELF SPARES BREAKING

PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200  
PLAXTON SUPREME 3/4 DUPE DOMINANT 1/2/4  
UNICAR BRISTOL AEC / FORDS / BEDFORDS  
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FOR CASH YOUR SCRAP BUSES AND COACHES

KIRTON BUS AND COACH DISMANTLERS

NORTH CLIFF ROAD, KIRTON LINDSEY, GAINSBOROUGH, LINC DN21 4NJ  
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*Large stocks of quality spares  
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Carlton, Nr Barnsley, South Yorkshire ((61747/VEH)

## Appointments & Tenders

Tel: 01733 467144

Fax: 01733 467154

### CONTRACTS FOR SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

U.S. Department of Defense Dependents Schools

European Procurement Office (DoDDS-EPO)

Gebäude 4003, D-55252 Mainz-Kastel, GERMANY

The U.S. Department of Defense Dependents  
Schools, European Procurement Office  
(DoDDS-EPO) intends to competitively award  
commercial contracts for daily bus transportation  
of school children for the following areas:

**High Wycombe (Bucks)**

**West Ruislip (Middx)**

**RAF Upwood (Cambs)**

**RAF Alconbury (Cambs)**

All interested parties should request  
solicitation(s) for their area(s) of interest to the  
above address, or fax to 0049-6134-604-517.

**INTERNET:**

**Peter\_Kowalski@ccmail.odedodea.edu**

(60828/TEN)

### CHESTER - DEESIDE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Cheshire County Council

Clwyd County Council

Chester City Council Allyn & Deeside District Council

Proposals are being drawn up by the above Local  
Authorities to re-use the former Mickle Trafford to Shotton  
railway line in the Cheshire/Deeside area as the basis for a  
high quality public transport system.

The Authorities envisage a segregated system, possibly a  
guided busway, using an environmentally friendly form of  
propulsion. Amongst other functions, the system could  
ultimately form the means of linking up to 5 park & ride  
sites to Chester city centre.

Public consultation has just taken place and the  
Authorities are now considering how to take the scheme  
forward. They would be interested in providing further  
information to and having preliminary discussions with any  
company which may be a potential promotion partner, and  
who has not already been contacted. This scheme could  
be of interest to bus operators, vehicle and engine  
manufacturers, fuel and propulsion system suppliers,  
consulting engineers and construction companies.

For further information, please write quoting ref.  
tp/cw/50891, to:

Neil Archibald, County Transport Co-ordinator,  
Cheshire County Council,  
Rivacre Business Centre, Mill Lane,  
Ellesmere Port,  
Cheshire L66 3TL

(57522/APP)



# Appointments & Tenders

Tel: 01733 467144

Fax: 01733 467154

## Mitcham Belle Coaches

**Mitcham Belle Coaches has vacancies for the following staff:**

- (i) An experienced bus scheduling clerk employed on a part-time basis, preferably with knowledge of the LT network. The position would include route timetabling, duty rostering and calculation, and route planning. Rates of pay are fully negotiable, dependent on experience in this field.
  - (ii) Experienced "Coachmen" for our tours and private hire programme. Applicants should have experience in this area, be amiable and maintain a good relationship with the general public.
- An excellent salary is offered for successful applicants along with staff uniform and a position in a go-ahead, friendly company.

Application forms for the above positions are available by contacting Mr. F. C. Wilde or Mr. K. C. Wilde on 0181-640 0104, or in writing to:-

**Mitcham Belle Coaches**

Belle House, 223 Streatham Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AJ

(61971/APP)

## PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION



An equal opportunity employer

### Deputy County Passenger Transport Officer

**Range 9: £25,569 - £30,063 per annum (Pay Award Pending)**

Our Passenger Transport section secures both socially necessary local bus services and the full range of home to school and college transport. The workload includes wide-ranging initiatives in support of the County's Integrated Transport Strategy promoting the use of public in preference to private transport.

As the Deputy County Passenger Transport Officer, you will play a crucial role in this work, overseeing in particular the section's public transport work (including significant publicity and information activities), as well as liaising with bus and train operators about ways in which their services and the County Council's policies can be mutually supportive. You will have the drive, enthusiasm and ability to further develop co-operation between the Council and its local bus and train operators to address significant transport policy issues that now face local communities, such as those in Buckinghamshire.

Qualified to degree level with at least 8 years' managerial experience, preferably in the bus or rail industry, you will be a skilled communicator in both written and oral forms, and demonstrate the ability to manage complex services within a predetermined budget. A postgraduate qualification in transport and membership of the Chartered Institute of Transport will be advantageous.

Although Buckinghamshire will be approximately 30% smaller from April 1997 when Milton Keynes becomes a Unitary Authority, the challenges for public transport in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and elsewhere in the smaller County will remain unchanged. Whilst this post is expected to continue beyond April 1997, it inevitably will face the challenge of delivering the required services from an increasingly constrained budget.

The attractive salary and benefits package includes temporary lodgings and removal allowances, flexible working hours, a car lease or loan, car user and mileage allowances and health insurance.

**For further information and a recruitment pack, please contact:**  
Personnel Section, Planning and Transportation Department,  
Buckinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Walton Street,  
Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UY or telephone 01296 382403  
(answerphone available outside office hours).

Closing date: 1st March 1996.

Selection procedures are scheduled for Monday 11th March 1996.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**



## PRESTON BUS LIMITED CHIEF ENGINEER ENGINEERING DIRECTOR

Preston Bus has a vacancy for a Chief Engineer with the ability to undertake a high degree of control of day to day engineering activities while at the same time taking a full role as a member of the Company's senior management team. The successful candidate is also likely to be appointed as an executive director.

Applicants must be suitably qualified engineers with a proven track record of vehicle workshop management with a large PCV or HGV fleet operator, enjoy the reputation of a good industrial relations background and the ability to communicate effectively with all levels of staff, customers and suppliers.

The Chief Engineer will be responsible for all engineering and related maintenance activities including management of a large commercial vehicle workshop section, building maintenance and ensuring the provision of satisfactory health and safety working standards.

Salary will be commensurate with that of a senior executive appointment in accordance with qualifications and experience.

**Please apply with detailed CV, to arrive prior to 10.00hrs on Monday 4th March 1996 addressed to:-**

**P.T.J. Bell, Managing Director, Preston Bus Limited,  
221 Deepdale Road, Preston, PR1 6NY.**

**For further information, telephone  
(01772) 253671 Ext. 127.**

(60865/APP)

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**IF SO, THEN LET US HELP YOU.**



provides you with the ideal opportunity to reach every section of personnel within the Coach and Bus industry.

Take the time and effort out of recruiting by calling us now on

**01733 467144**

Coach and Bus Week ending 17 February 1996

Say you saw it in **CBW**



# Appointments & Tenders

Tel: 01733 467144

Fax: 01733 467154



## Provision of education transport

### Kings Lynn area network review

Tenders are invited for the provision of transport services (buses, taxis, minibuses) operating in the Kings Lynn area to Gaywood Park High, Springwood High, King Edward VII High, and contributory schools, from Monday 15 April 1996.

**Closing date for the receipt of tenders: 2pm on Thursday 7 March 1996.**

Full details and the tender documents are available from:  
**Niki Park, Education Transport, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DL.**

Tel: (01603) 222308 Fax: (01603) 222119

(60818/TEN)

*Luton based executive coach company requires*

## COACH CONTROLLERS - OPERATIONS

We are seeking a person with extensive experience in corporate, UK and Continental Touring work. Flexibility and the ability to work under pressure essential together with being able to work well as part of a team. Shift and weekend work necessary.

*Please send full CV with past experience, qualifications and present salary to:*

**Mr G Morton**  
**Traffic Manager, Hallmark Cars Ltd**  
**Hallmark House, Dallow Road, Luton**  
**Beds, LU1 1TW**

(61768/APP)

## London Transport bus services

London Transport Buses will shortly be inviting tenders for the operation of the following London Transport bus routes.

<b>91</b>	<b>Crouch End - Trafalgar Square</b>
<b>184</b>	<b>Turnpike Lane - Barnet</b>
<b>298</b>	<b>Southgate - South Mimms</b>
<b>624</b>	<b>Welling Corner - Eltham Green</b>
<b>638</b>	<b>Coney Hall - Sidcup</b>
<b>661</b>	<b>Petts Wood - Eltham College</b>
<b>N91</b>	<b>Cockfosters - Trafalgar Square</b>
<b>Bexley and Greenwich Mobility Bus Network</b>	

If you are interested and have already submitted your pre-qualification documents then you need take no further action at this stage. However if you are interested and have not completed London Transport's pre-qualification system for bus service tendering then you must do so by 4th March 1996 in order to receive invitations to tender for the above routes.

Pre-qualification documents are available by writing to:

Mr T Wynne  
Buyer  
London Transport Buses  
172 Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 9TN  
Telephone 0171 918 3812



**London Transport Buses**

## INVITING TENDERS?

The directors/owners of the Bus and Coach Companies who read *Coach and Bus Week* are looking to provide you with competitive and cost conscious quotes, while providing the best possible service.

By advertising in *Coach and Bus Week* you will:

- ★ Put your tender in front of over 6,700 senior management/directors in the industry.
- ★ Give yourself the best selection of quotes and tenders available.
- ★ Ensure the best chance of good quality response.

*'We currently use Coach and Bus Week for our Tender advertising and are very pleased with the results we receive!'*

**Alison Roberts**  
**Marketing Executive**  
**London Transport**

## COACH AND BUS WEEK - THE ONLY CHOICE FOR TENDERS

To place your advertisement or for further information please contact  
**01733 467144**



# 01733 467144 DIRECTORY

## A to Z DIRECTORY

**Telephone numbers  
at a glance**

**Coach and Bus Week  
tel: 01733 467144**

**You know the name - but what's the number? Find it here in the Instant Phone Guide**

### A

AA First for Coach and Bus  
Spares tel: 0121 515 3672

Abex Brake Linings, P&P  
Sergeant tel: 0151 632 5903

Actionform Ltd. Engine Refurb  
tel: 01902 714242  
fax: 01902 22880

AD Coachsales, New & used  
coaches tel: 01884 860767

AE Auto Parts Engine  
components tel: 01274 723481

AK Carpets, Coach carpets and  
trim tel: 01254 871879

Allison Transmissions  
Mitchells tel: 01623 550550

Andy Powell Commercials for  
Dennis and Bedford spares  
tel: 01432 341085

Autoglass Coach & Bus Services  
London ..... 0181 903 6500  
South East ..... 01293 525155  
East Anglia ..... 01603 788251  
South Coast ..... 01202 676040  
South West ..... 01454 620515  
Wales ..... 01792 790060  
Midlands ..... 0116 275 0271  
North ..... 0161 624 0025  
Tyne-side & Cumbria .. 0191 491 0529  
Scotland South ..... 0141 347 1066  
Scotland North ..... 01224 647089  
Dial free throughout UK 0800 222 777

### B

Belaco Ltd, Brake linings  
tel: 01298 811236

Berkhof, Ave-Sales, Parts  
& Services tel: 01344 861787

Beral Brake Linings  
Roadlink International  
Tel: 01902 636206

Birmingham Bus Centre Ltd,  
New + used vehicles  
Tel: 0121 415 5111

Brushwash, Vehicle Wash  
Equipment tel: 01252 377855

Bryden Riveting Machines,  
Roadlink Int' tel: 01902 636206

Bus & Coach Glazing (Ware)  
tel: 01920 485996  
Freephone: 0800 220077  
Bus & Coach Glazing (Anston)  
tel: 01909 551188  
Freephone: 0800 220077

Bus & Coach Glazing (Barrhead)  
tel: 0141 8761177  
Freephone: 0800 220077

Busparts, for windscreens, body  
and chassis parts  
B/Ham: 0121-524-1200  
Bristol: 0117-971 6071  
London: 01932-569 177

### C

Carlyle Parts, Windscreens &  
Glass tel: 0121 555 5055  
CCS 24hr Coach Mobile  
B/Down Svc tel: 0181 5617838

Cheshire Coach and Bus  
Coach&Bus Hire  
tel: 01625 860888

**Coach Wash, Armchair  
Brentford tel: 0181 568 8227**

Confederation of Passenger  
Transport UK tel: 0171 831 7546

Cornish-NW, Insurance  
tel: 0151 5461282

Countrywide Derv Ltd  
Dover, Kent. tel: 01304 202934

C. Anthony Wood & Co  
Accountants tel: 0181 866 8232

Cummins Engine Co Ltd,  
N Harrison tel: 01325 460606

Coach and Commercials  
Tel: 01226 752086  
0831 294542

Central Bus and Coach  
Distributors Ltd  
Tel: 01531 640026

### D

DB. Associates Business  
Consultants tel: 01799 540513

DB Commercial, Repairs &  
Resprays tel: 01223 833121

Dennis Specialists Vehicles  
tel: 01483 571271

Devon Conversions (CP) Ltd.  
Mini & Midi's tel: 01392 211611

Diesel Masters-Iveco,  
Engines tel: 01952 588895  
Distinctive Systems  
Computers tel: 01904 692269

Drivers seats, Thomas Scott &  
Co: tel: 0141 763 2120

### E

East Lancashire Coach  
Builders 01254 57061  
Engines, Preston Engines:  
tel: 01772 651629

### F

FCL, Foam & Air Filters  
tel: 01604 671100

Fuel Management Equipment by  
Triscan tel: 01254 682111

Foxlands Hotel  
tel: 01803 328072

### G

L Gardner & Sons Ltd  
Bus Engines tel: 0161 789 2201

Gary Smith, Spares and recovery  
tel: 01789 267990

Gas Strut Engineering  
tel: 01234 843979

Gripton-Battery Booster plugs  
& screws tel: 0161 727 9011

### H

Hindle Auto for Engine  
and ZF Trans.  
Tel: 01274 732284

### I

Insurance, Robin Huckle & Co Ltd.  
tel: 0121 454 8878

### J

J Sykes, PSV Sales &  
Spares tel: 01226 725702

Jackair Testers & Lifts,  
tel: 0117 9673333

### K

Kernow Driving Serv.  
tel: 01850 701450

Kirkby Coach and Bus  
Sheffield tel: 01909 551166

Kirton Bus & Coach  
Dismantlers tel: 01652 648628

KONI Shock Absorbers,  
Roadlink Int' tel: 01902 636206

### L

Leyland Engines, call  
Actionform! tel: 01902 714242

### M

MAN Truck & Bus UK Ltd  
Swindon tel: 01793 490231

Marshall Bus sales and service  
tel: 01223 373065

Mercedes Benz  
(United Kingdom) Ltd  
tel: 01908 245000

### N

NDY Coach Sales Ltd  
tel: 0191 377 1802

Nightbright P.C.V. Cleaning  
Specialist tel: 01850 174029

Northern Counties Ltd  
Bus Bodies tel: 01942 212135

### O

Olympus Coachcraft-of  
Manchester tel: 0161 2734259

### P

Paul Gardner, Engineering Ltd  
tel: 0161 787 7357

Plaxton Parts & Service  
Anston tel: 01909 551155  
Direct Parts tel: 01909 550044

Plaxton Parts & Service  
Barrhead tel: 0141 8815625  
Direct Parts tel: 0141 880 8008

Plaxton Parts & Service  
Ware tel: 01920 462383  
Direct Parts tel: 01920 465946

Power Steering Services  
tel: 01692 406017  
Fax: 01692 406957

Preston Engines  
tel: 01772 651629

Prolift, Mobile Vehicle Lifts  
tel: 01432 350330

PSV Glass  
tel: 01494-533131 Fax: 01494 462675

### R

Reg. Plates, Tayside Numbers:  
tel: 01826 25245

### S

Scania Coach sales Ltd  
Contact: Ian Hall  
Tel: 01909 500822  
Fax: 01909 500165

Scania GB Ltd Milton Keynes  
MK15 tel: 01908 210210  
Screen Savers, Glazing  
tel: 01831 551166

Southcoast, Trimmings  
tel: 01703 660676

Steamy Windows, J W  
Glass tel: 01283 32418

Steering Box Repairs &  
Exchange tel: 01905 795955

Somers Vehicle Lifts  
tel: 0121 501 1077

### T

Telma Retarder Ltd  
tel: 01908 642822 Fax: 641348

Time Table Frames,  
Broadwater: tel: 01379 644327

Toyota GB tel: 01737 785320  
After Sales tel: 01737 785213

Training-Vi's-Comp.  
Service tel: 0117 9543291

Tramontana, Coach & Mini-  
Bus Sales tel: 01698 861790

Transport Heating  
Supplies tel: 01925 722687

### U

Uniforms Unlimited, Fax &  
tel: 01423 528275

### V

Vehicle Wash Equipment  
Brushwash tel: 01252 377855

Vehicle Lifts — Somers Handling  
tel: 0121 501 1077

Vulcan Eng, Seats&Hand Rails  
Halifax tel: 01422 202840

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▼ Dealers

## New faces on Kirkby sales team

COACH and bus dealership Kirkby has two new faces on its sales team.

**Andrew Warrender** is the new sales administration manager, running the sales systems at Anston. The 31-year-old from Weldon, Northants, worked at Premier Travel Services of Cambridge, and had previously spent 11 years as a BT engineer.

**Charlie Middleton** will be handling sales in Scotland and Northern Ireland. An Edinburgh man, and a member of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers, he returns to Kirkby after a brief spell with ERF trucks.

▼ Coach

## Plaxton recruits troubleshooter

### Parts and support representative

**KAREN Pritchard** is acting as Plaxton's eyes and ears in the operator's yard — the Scarborough-based coachbuilder has appointed her as its troubleshooter.

Her role as parts support representative is a broad brief, but includes her driving from one Plaxton customer to

by Mark Williams

another. "It's very important for us to listen to customers and find out first hand any ways in which our service could be improved, or how our buses are performing," she says. "Everyone is very friendly, and there's an



**Karen Pritchard: Plaxton's eyes and ears**

obvious camaraderie at all the depots I visit. It's something I really enjoy." Karen has worked for Plaxton on exhibitions and advertising but during her previous job with an advertising agency.

▼ Bus

## Winter joins Marshall from CHL Group

FORMER Cambus engineering director **Mike Winter** has joined Cambridge-based Marshall Specialist Vehicles as its new sales director.

Mr Winter has spent 32 years

in the industry, developing a broad knowledge of vehicles from the point of view of the buyer while with Cambus Holdings Limited (CHL) Group.

Marshall is hoping Mr Winter will be able to develop interest in its stainless-steel Marshall Minibus, shown at Coach & Bus 95 at the NEC last year.



## SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

*Coach and Bus Week* is the news weekly for coach and bus operators. *Transit* provides vital analysis of, and information on, the UK public transport scene every fortnight. Together they make an unbeatable and invaluable package. All annual subscription rates include delivery by first class post. It is important to fill out all parts of this form. NB: *Transit* is not available on subscription without *Coach and Bus Week*.

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

**YOUR COMPANY DETAILS**

1. What is your primary job title?

(Tick one only)

Owner/Director	01
Senior/General Manager	02
Engineering/Service Manager	03
Other (please specify)	04

2. What is your company's main business function?

Bus Operator	01
Coach Operator	05
Coach & Bus Operator	02

Local Government	03
Other (please specify)	04

3. How many vehicles does your company own/operate?

(Tick all that apply)

	Buses	Coaches
1-5	01	10
6-10	02	11
11-15	03	12
16-25	04	13
26-39	05	14
40-100	06	15
101-400	07	16
401-1000	08	17
1000 +	09	18

4. Do you have responsibility for the recommendation/purchase and/or specification of the following?

(Tick all that apply)

	Pur	Spec	Rec
Vehicles	01	12	23
Parts/Spares	02	13	24
Oil/Fuel	03	14	25
Breakdown	04	15	26
Insurance/Finance	05	16	27
Fuel Cards	06	17	28
Training	07	18	29
Venue/Attraction Tickets	08	19	30
Ferry Crossing	09	20	31
Hotel Bookings	10	21	32
Theatre Tickets	11	22	33
Other (please specify)			34

5. What type of work does your company undertake?

(Tick all that apply)

Private Hire	01
Day Excursions	02
British Tours	03
European Tours	04
Local Government Contracts	05
Emergency/Breakdown Services	06

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